1609/3300.

A DEFENCE OF THE *Antient Historians*: WITH A Particular APPLICATION of it to the HISTORY of *IRELAND*.

Remember the Days of Old, and consider the Years of many Generations. Deut. *the* 32d, Ver. 7.
Ask thy Fathers and they will tell thee, Ask thy Elders and they will shew thee.
In the Beginning it was not so, but God *made them Male and Female.*

Vixere fortes ante Agamemnona multi.
Naturæ Majestas in omnibus momentis fide caret, si modo partes ejus considerat, et non totam complectatur animo.

Pliny's Natural History.

Quod adest memento componere æquus.

DUBLIN:

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15 64 APR

THE PREFACE

AS in this following Eſſay, I have ventured upon ſome old faſhioned Notions, that are different from the Modern way of Thinking; it is neceſſary to Premiſe ſomething in way of Preface, that may keep the Reader from condemning it, without giving it a patient Peruſal.

I take leave therefore to inform him, that when I firſt put Pen to Pa-

per upon this Subject, I intended only ſome ſhort Obſervations upon the *Iriſh Hiſtory*: And as Modern Facts are moſt uſeful to us in judging of the Obligations that are upon us from our Covenants and Laws, and finding out Examples and Rules for our own Behaviour, I deſigned only to inquire into the State of *Ireland* in the Age immediately preceding that in which the *Engliſh* were invited, and thought it Neceſſary to undertake that Attempt they made upon *Ireland*, and to ſhew where the Fault lay, that it proved no better for both Nations; and as the only way of making it a Benefit to both for the future, lies ſo plainly before us, that we cannot miſs it without unpardonable Perverſeneſs, I deſigned only to add a few plain Words upon that, and then leave it.

But altho' theſe later Tranſactions are moſt uſeful to us in judging what becomes us as *Engliſh* and *Iriſh*, and as

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as *Protestant* and *Papist*; yet as the first Beginning of our whole Race upon Earth, and its re-peepling after the Flood, concerns us more as Men and Christians; and as many of the *Eastern* first-planted Nations had noble Traditions about those great Points, and few were without some; and as the learned *Plutarch* tells us, that *Ireland* had as old as any of them, and was the true *Ogygia* of the Antients, if their Histories might be believed; and as the Natives have of late translated many of their old Fragments into *English* Verse and Prose; and as our Blessed Saviour tells us, *that every Scribe, who is rightly instructed to the Kingdom of Heaven, brings out of his Treasures things old as well as new*; I thought it was very fit and even necessary for a Christian Bishop to bestow a little time in looking into their History, and seeing how far it agreed with the Divine History of *Moses*; and I had spent but a

little

little Time in gathering Materials for a ſhort Chapter or Introduction to my other Work, before I thought I ſaw plainly, that Modern Criticks had not only been too ſevere in their Cenſures of the *Iriſh* Hiſtorians, but alſo of the *Engliſh* and *Scottiſh*, and moſt other of the *Northern* Nations: And as their Treatment of them hath been ſo ſevere, as to give them all up as a Pack of lying ridiculous Fellows that were not worthy to be believed or read, I thought their Uſage of them was worſe than their's, who burnt whole Libraries of their Books at a Time; for thoſe only conſumed ſuch Manuſcripts, as happened to be in thoſe particular Collections; but theſe condemned all the reſt in cool Blood, and covered their Names in Oblivion, with ſuch an ill Character upon them, as would keep their Works from ever riſing up into Remembrance.

From the Time that I fell into this way of Thinking, I reſolved to change

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the Name of my Pamphlet, and instead of calling it, *Observations upon the* Irish *History*, I resolved to call it, *A Defence of the Antient Historians, with a particular Application of it to the History of* Ireland.

I will not forestal what I have to say, with a longer *Preface*, but yet I will add, That when I blame the Moderns, I do not mean such as the Lord *Bacon*, *Cambden*, *Bochartus*, Archbishop *Usher*, Sr. *Walter Raleigh*, Dr. *Peter Heylen*, Sr. *Isaac Newton*, Dr. *Stillingfleet*, nor Dr. *Nicholson* the late Lord Archbishop of *Cashel*, or any others that will hear Reason; But the very Ingenious Sr. *William Temple* I do mean for one: For in his Introduction to the History of *Great-Britain*, he proposes That it should go no farther back than the Time of *Julius Cæsar*, and gives up the Elder ones, as Rubbish, that he had not troubled himself to look into: And therefore, altho' I

have

have read him with Pleasure, and shall quote him, as often and with as much respect as any one, yet I name him as the First of the Moderns, that I find Fault with. And I name the learned Abbot *Vertot* for the next; for he writes, *Fabulous History*, at the Head of the Chronological Table of the Old Kings of *Sweden*; and yet the very Years that he puts down, as the Time when his Kings lived, agree, as well as needs to be, with the Dates of other Nations, and are full as Antient as our *Irish*. I also blame Mr. *Collier*, and the Jesuites of *Trevoux*, and most other Dictionary Writers, who pass over the first Planters of the *North-western* Nations, altho' we have stronger Historical Proofs of the Reality of their Histories, than we have of many of those that lived a Thousand Years after them. Hardly any of them now go farther backward than the last Conquest, or Invasion; and if we go on

much

much longer in the ſame Way, for ought I know, we may come in Time to be a little like the *Americans*, of whom the learned Jeſuit *Joſeph Acoſta* tells us, " That he could not find " any good Accounts amongſt them, " whereby they could prove that the " World had been in being above 400 " Years, And ſad was the State that followed ſo great Ignorance. As they had loſt the Knowledge of God, and his Creation, and the great Providences by which he made himſelf known in the Beginning, they loſt every thing elſe that was valuable and praiſe-worthy in human Nature, and to this Day the greateſt part of them continue in the ſame brutal Life, and even the four Kings that were lately brought into *England* from thence, and were kindly received at Court, and made ſome Appearance of being deſirous of being inſtructed in the Chriſtian Religion, are

returned

returned to their old Vagrant Life in the Woods, as we are well assured by one of the last Missionaries that was sent into those Parts in that printed Account that was published last Year, by that noble Society that was founded in *England*, for the Propagation of the *Christian Faith* in Forren Parts.

If we by neglecting to keep up the Credit of those Historians, by which only we can prove the new-peopling of our several Nations after the Flood, and let Atheistical Men banter us out of the Belief of the Creation; we know not how low we may sink into Brutality and Wickedness.

We can say now as we do daily in that Divine Hymn of the *Te Deum*, *All the Earth does worship thee, O God the Father Everlasting*; and we can think with Pleasure in our Minds, that our own remote Corner of the Earth, and our Neighbours round about us, bear our Part with that

that Noble Quire that daily offer up to God that pious Worship: And that I may vindicate the Honour of those Historians, by which we must establish our selves in the Belief of this, and bring it home to our own Nations, and yet not take up scattered Sentences from nameless Authors, I will lay before you, some of those Authorities that I have met with, in the same Order in which I put them down when I began this Essay; and if the same Train of Thinking, that brought me into this Opinion, shall bring the Reader into the same Thought, it will be a Sign, that it is grounded upon right Reason: And if it shall happen otherwise, it can only be said, that my Love to my Religion, and my Partiality to the Historians have carried me a little too far in their Favour, and I am in no fear of falling under any Blame of that sort, for our human Nature is not such a rascally Breed, as to have all its old

Histo-

Hiſtorians prove a Pack of lying Fellows. Altho' our Race is but weak, and was much weaker at firſt, before it was improved by Experience and Learning and true Religion, yet even then, they were not ſo vitious as to have its beſt Men ſit down to write falſe Regiſters, on purpoſe to poiſon the Minds of their Poſterity.

I have always look'd upon the real Hiſtorians in all Ages, as a Diligent Uſeful ſort of Men, who, generally ſpeaking, deſerved as much Regard as the Philoſophers of the ſame Ages, and they have this Advantage above them, that the Philoſopher could only tell us the Conjectures he made from the Face of Nature, but the Hiſtorian was Witneſs of plain Matter of Fact in the Invention of Arts, the Changes of Nature, and the Works both of God and Man, and any intermediate inviſible Beings, and thoſe added to what we have ſeen our ſelves, or known

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by good Authority, may make our Judgments more ſure and uſeful, and make our old Hiſtorians deſerve to be treated with great Regard; and as too many turn them off with too much Levity, I hope I ſhall be able to ſhew, that their Diſregard of them is uſually owing to their own Miſunderſtanding of them, and not knowing what kind of Proof is proper and ſufficient for the ſeveral Ages that they lived in.

In hopes to bring this uſeful Point into a fair View for Judgment, and find out true Rules of diſtinguiſhing true Hiſtory from falſe, and ſaving the Credit of thoſe that are left, I have printed this Notice of what I have in my Intentions, in hope that ſuch of the Nobility or Gentry as have any Hiſtorical Manuſcripts in the Old *Iriſh* Character in their Poſſeſſion, will favour me with the Sight of ſuch of them as they think Valuable: For altho' I my ſelf have no Doubt of the

Truth

Truth of those large Catalogues quoted by the learned Dr. *Nicholson* in his *Irish Historical Library*. Yet; as I find many are slow in believing that there are any considerable Number of them, I should be glad to be able to say something of them from my own Eyesight: For altho' I pretend not to understand much of the Language, yet I have several Books written in it, and am no Stranger to it's Character and Alphabet; and I have Friends that understand it well, and will be able to tell me whether they are Chronicles or not; for even the learned Dr. *Stillingfleet*, whom I will not name without Honour, was mistaken even in that, and calls *Psalter-Narran*, a Book of only *Piety and Devotion*, tho' Dr. *Nicholson* says, it was a History, and contains a Chronicle of the long Race of Kings, from *Milesius* down to the coming of *Henry* the 2*d*. See his Historical

rical Library, *Page* 29. where we may see an Account also of the Psalter of *Cashel*, and many others.

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